



IN REPLY REFER TO:

10. A. (HATU)

June 11, 2015

Dear Friends,

As responsible stewards of public funding, the Department of Interior has implemented a review and approval process for government involvement with conferences. Beginning in 2012, the National Underground Railroad Conference obtained this approval annually, based on materials provided by the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program.

The 2015 review led to a request for clarification and additional information. Further materials will be submitted in response, but there is not sufficient time to complete the process for a conference to be held this year. Unfortunately, the conference will be postponed to fiscal year 2016. We sincerely appreciate the patience and involvement of all our partners thus far, particularly the Hilton Head Island Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, the Mitchelville Preservation Project, the Hilton Head Island Land Trust, the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, the Organization of American Historians, and the presenters whose contributions promised to make this such a stellar learning experience.

The National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom is committed to commemorating the abolition of the institution of slavery in the United States and exploring the transition to freedom—the theme of the postponed conference. Our intention is to hold a conference on this topic at the location of one of the first self-governed communities of former slaves in the United States, Mitchelville on Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. Once the approval process has been completed, we will notify everyone about new dates, next steps and opportunities to participate in the conference.

Sincerely,

Diane Miller

National Program Manager

National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom